Written by CAROL POMEDAY
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Former Demge land adjacent to wastewater filtration plant is targeted

The Village of Belgium should develop a three-acre dog park adjacent to the wastewater treatment facility on Silver Beach Road, the Parks and Recreation Committee recommended Tuesday.

The Plan Commission, which met after the parks committee, also endorsed the project and approved dividing the 11.3-acre parcel recently acquired from Julaine Demge of Oceanside, Calif., into two parcels — one three acres and the other 8.3 acres.

“I thought two acres would be large enough, but Vickie (Boehnlein) convinced me that we needed three acres,” Village President Richard Howells told the Plan Commission. “Mrs. Demge requested one acre.

“I think this is the ideal place for it. It’s in the industrial park, and there are no residents nearby.”

The dog park would be 220 feet wide by the length of the filtration property. The remaining 8.3 acres will be kept for possible expansion of the filtration plant, Howells said.

The former Demge land, which was scheduled for foreclosure by Ozaukee County, was acquired for $37,000 — $9,000 in back taxes to the county and $28,000 in village assessments.

A three-acre dog park is what Boehnlein said she hoped would be developed.

“Everything I read said five acres was a good size, and I figured anything smaller than three acres would be too small,” Boehnlein said.

The size was also dictated by the amount of land available adjacent to the treatment facility, she said.

“We didn’t want to take a big chunk out of the middle of the property,” Boehnlein said. “Anything less would have been a long, narrow strip.”

By placing the dog park adjacent to the treatment facility, the existing fence can be used for the dog park, Howells said.

“This way, the people developing the park will only have to fence in three sides instead of four,” he said, adding that Boehnlein will spearhead the project.

Boehnlein said she would prefer someone else take the lead.

“I don’t want this to be my project. It’s for the community,” she said. “I’m hoping that we will have members of the community come out and get involved.”

The major downside of the property is that it is a farm field that must be graded and seeded. Trees and bushes will have to be planted to provide shade, Boehnlein said.

“It doesn’t have to all be done before it can be used. Dogs are pretty forgiving,” she said. “Hopefully, people will donate trees and stuff.”

There are organizations that relocate trees that are in the way of a development, Boehnlein said.

“If we can get some larger trees, that would be great,” she said. “The Arbor Society gives away trees, but they’re small seedlings. There are a lot of things that can be done for minimal or no cost.

“We have sewer and water there, so we can put in a spigot for people to fill water bowls for their dogs.”

Howells said plastic bags would be available at the site for people to pick up after their dogs and a disposal container.

“The cost should be minimal to the village,” he said. “Other dog parks are only mowed once or twice a year.”

Anyone interested in helping with the dog park should contact Village Hall.